

# The A Rocha Story

**The Environment and the Gospel Conference**

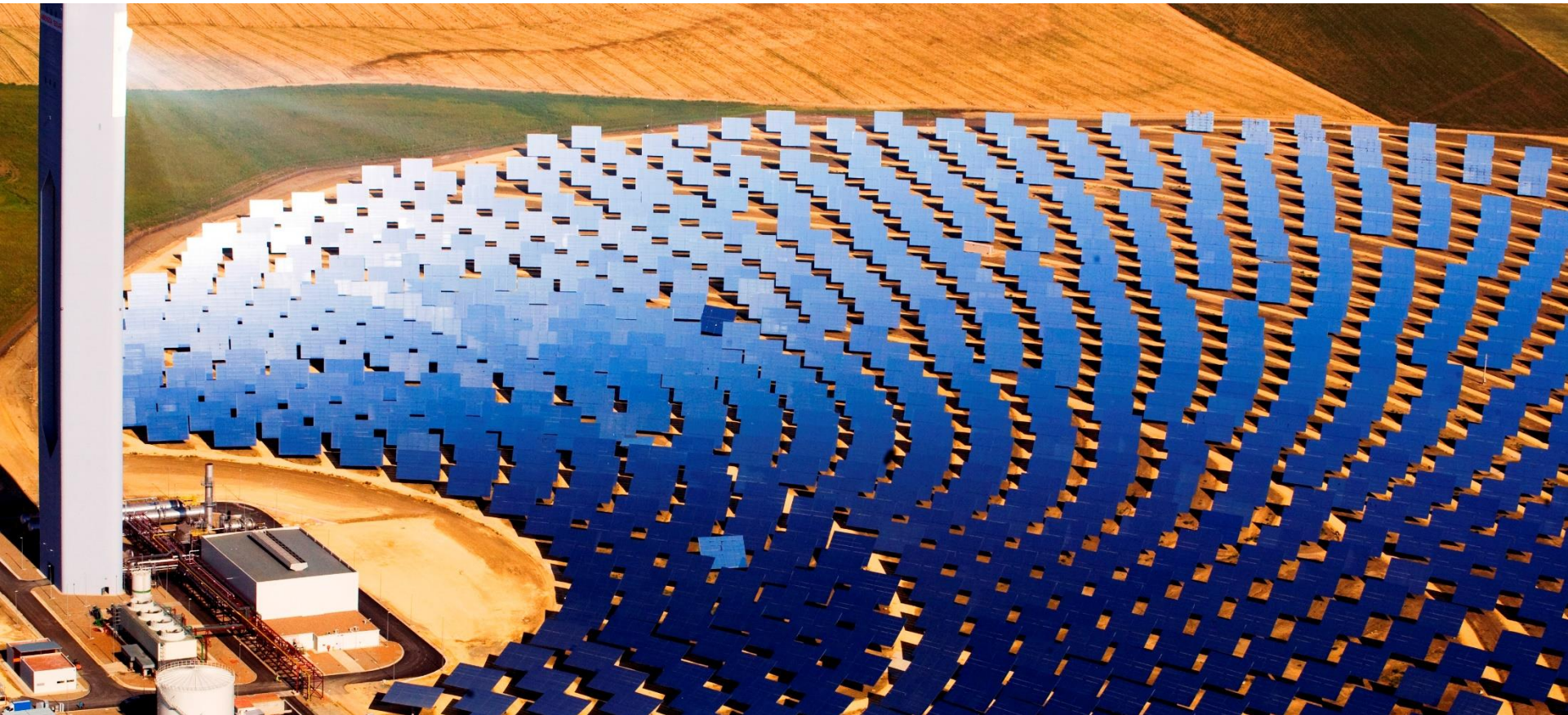
**Victorian Conference  
St Mark's Anglican Church, Spotswood**

**14 October 2017**



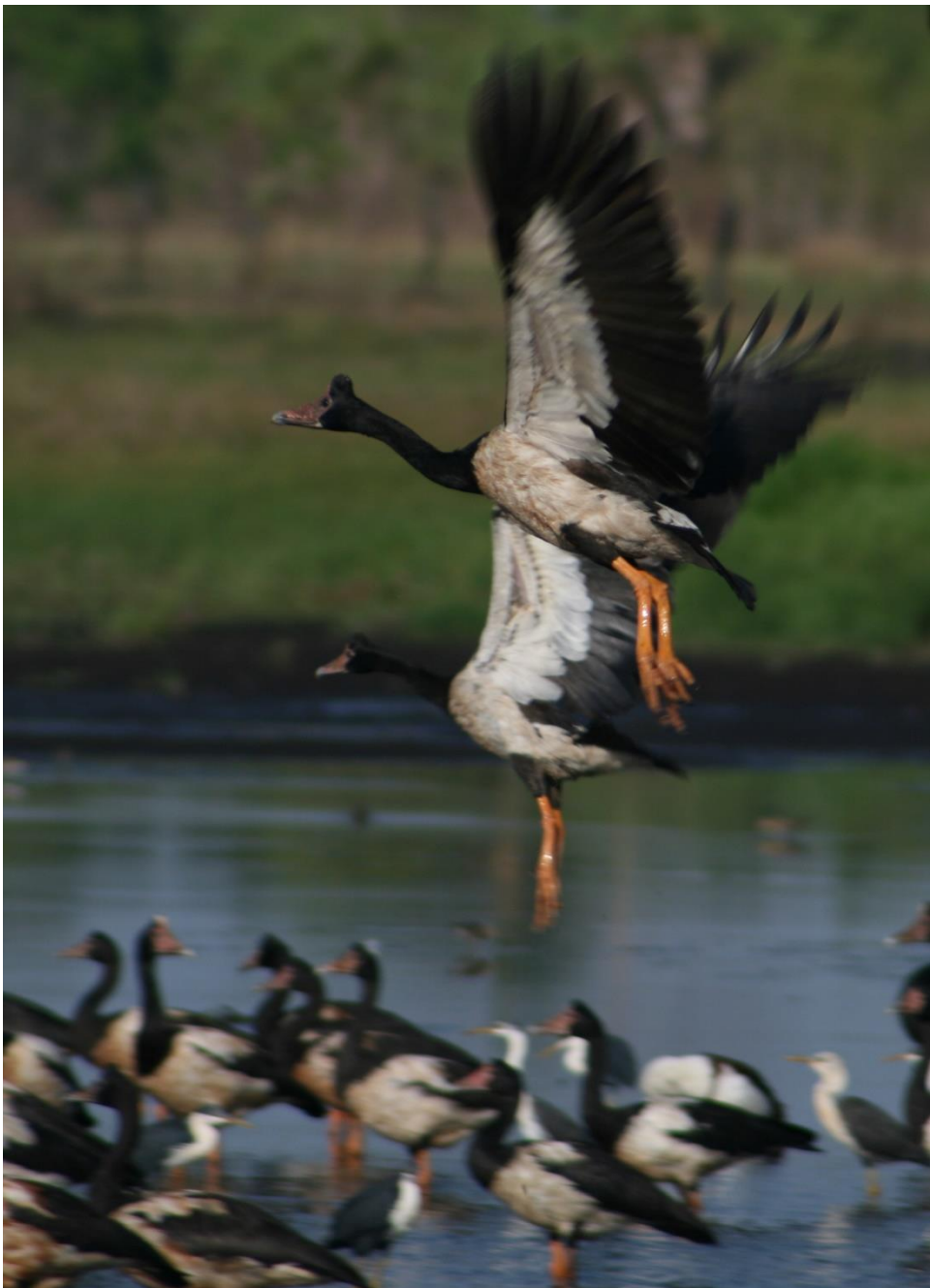
**Dr Stuart Blanch  
Director  
A Rocha Australia  
0403 209 805**

**Is it normal for a Christian to be concerned about the environment?**





**Should Christians who love God and His Bible  
be concerned about the environment?**



**Does caring for God's  
creation distract from  
gospel mission?**



**Can a Christian serve Jesus in environmental mission?**

# A Rocha, 1983



# A short history

- 1983-85 - Vision is born, charity set up in UK, founders move to Portugal. Christians and environmentalists ask “Why A Rocha?”
- 1986-94 - Field studies centre and school env education in the Alvor Estuary, more visitors
- 1995-99 - Portugal project established, focus moves to new countries, e.g., France, Lebanon, UK
- 2000-01 - international network grows, new governance, interest in Australia starts to grow
- 2002-06 - 8 new countries, e.g., Ghana, Brazil, India, stronger science oversight, Climate Stewards
- 2007-14 - expand to NZ and Uganda, extra theological expertise, Management Team in UK
- 2015-17 - A Rocha Australia formed (20 in total), partnerships e.g., WEA/Lausanne, some A Rocha org’s struggling

# A Rocha Core Commitments

## **1. Christian**

Underlying all we do is our biblical faith in the living God, who made the world, loves it and entrusts it to the care of human society.

## **2. Conservation**

We carry out research for the conservation and restoration of the natural world and run environmental education programmes for people of all ages.

## **3. Community**

Through our commitment to God, each other and the wider creation, we aim to develop good relationships both within the A Rocha family and in our local communities.

## **4. Cross-cultural**

We draw on the insights and skills of people from diverse cultures, both locally and around the world.

## **5. Cooperation**

We work in partnership with a wide variety of organizations and individuals who share our concerns for a sustainable world.



**A Rocha seeks to live out Jesus' command to love God not money. We challenge a dualist view of the gospel that says Christians can be personally saved but continue to live greedy lives without loving others or God's creation.**



# How A Rocha works

- Staff and volunteers who are committed evangelical theologians, professional conservation scientists, environmental educators, conservation project managers, videographers, sustainable farmers, poverty alleviation practitioners, community development, etc
- Scientific research e.g., staff authored and co-authored 27 scientific research papers since 2015
- Engages in partnerships, conferences, joint research, provision of advice
- Owns and / or manages land for nature conservation

**A Rocha seeks to give hope by living out faithful lives in Jesus Christ amidst the global environmental crises that is destroying His Creation, due to humanity's sin.**

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# A Rocha Australia

- Interest started growing in 2005, formed in October 2015
- Incorporated association in NSW
- Not-for-profit charity, now seeking DGR & REO status
- Strong evangelical Christian statement of faith
- Board of Directors with broad expertise
- Cash reserves of a few thousand dollars
- 54 members, 300 supporters
- 3 annual conferences held
- Ambitious Strategic Plan, e.g., field studies centres
- Goal to appoint a paid Exec Officer
- ARA Associated Projects (Tahlee, Capernwray)
- Networks in Victoria, SE Qld, SA

# A Rocha Australia Objects

- Advancement of the Christian faith and understanding of its relevance to creation care;
- Education of the public by promotion of conservation, and scientific study of ecology and the environment; and
- Enablement of practical projects in conservation of biodiversity, natural resources and habitats in a community context for the benefit of future generations.

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# A Rocha Australia *ENEWS*

Autumn 2017



## Update from our President

Our network of members, supporters and associates has continued to grow. During March, the board of directors of A Rocha Australia formally agreed to the accreditation of the Capernwray Environmental Plan – Stage 1 (Southern Highlands, NSW) as an Associated Project of ARA. The next step involves completion and joint signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between ARA and Capernwray Torchbearers Australia to define this arrangement. Our cooperative interactions with Capernwray regarding creation care have been a great blessing and we pray that this will continue and grow, to the glory of God."

**Roger Jaensch**  
President (Chair, board of directors - QLD)

## Spotted at Tahlee!!

This healthy looking koala was seen in early March by a local birdwatching group on a tour of the Tahlee property.



**CREATION CARE CAMP**  
SCRIPTURE UNION NEW SOUTH WALES



Director Jen Schabel helped to lead a Creation Care camp near Tamworth in April, a wonderful time of community, permaculture, cooking and gaining a biblical perspective on creation care.

# Thank you



Directors of A Rocha Australia, 2017